March 2, 2021

Colonel Jason Kelly
Commander, South Atlantic District
Department of the Army
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
60 Forsyth Street SW, Room 10M15
Atlanta, GA 30303-8801

Subject: No Delay in Everglades Restoration: Project Partnership Agreement for the Central Everglades Planning Project, Everglades Agricultural Area Phase

Dear Colonel Kelly:

Our agencies have made tremendous progress in working to restore America's Everglades. Everglades restoration projects all around Lake Okeechobee are important to realizing the benefits envisioned in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and improving the management of Lake Okeechobee and our water resources. Large-scale storage projects are important to reducing harmful and sometimes toxic discharges from the Lake to communities and businesses along the Northern Estuaries.

Today, the South Florida Water Management District (District) urges you to continue the momentum for Everglades restoration by developing and executing a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) for the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Phase of the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) no later than June 2021. Executing a PPA by June will keep the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on schedule to execute the first federal construction contract for the EAA Reservoir in Fiscal Year 2021.

As the local sponsor, the District has taken the following actions to ensure that the EAA Phase can move forward quickly:

- Secured all land for the project;
- Legally protected the water gained by the project for the natural system via rulemaking effective on January 31, 2021 as required under Section 601(h) of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000;
- Coordinated with Florida Department of Transportation on design and construction of necessary bridges associated with the EAA Reservoir; and
- Awarded the final contract needed to build the associated Stormwater Treatment Area.

At the direction of Governor Ron DeSantis, the District expedited the construction of the state's responsibilities for the CEPP EAA Phase, and we are prepared to execute a PPA and all associated documents immediately. With all barriers to the EAA Phase removed, the USACE should also be able to move forward with development of a PPA and federal construction of

the EAA Reservoir. Thank you for your commitment to implementing the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).

Sincerely,

Drew Bartlett
Executive Director

DB/mj

cc: Howie Gonzalez, SAJ
COL Andrew Kelly, SAJ
Mike Magley, SAD
Dr. Larry McCallister, SAD
Eric Summa, SAD